

October is School Safety Month!

HB 583 designated October as School Safety Month in Ohio to increase public awareness of school safety programs and to encourage Ohioans to identify their role in keeping Ohio schools a safe place for students to learn and grow.

This year's theme is:

Know School Safety, Know Your Role — It's Everyone's Responsibility

Each week has a theme to help schools highlight resources they have within their school and community and provides an opportunity to engage with students, staff, parents/guardians, and community members on their school safety programs.

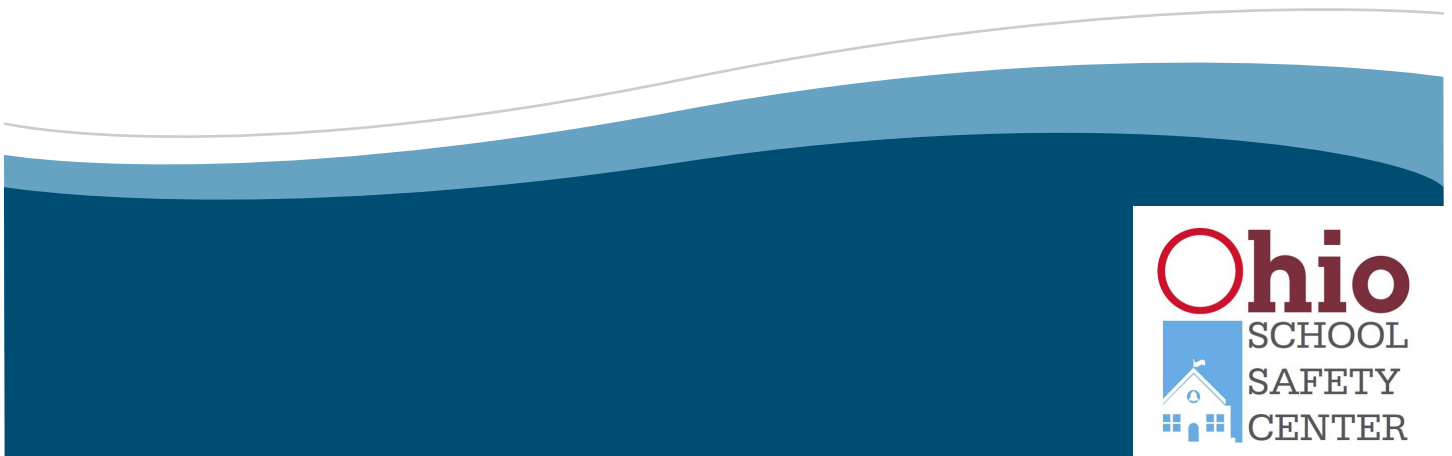
Week 1: Comprehensive Safety

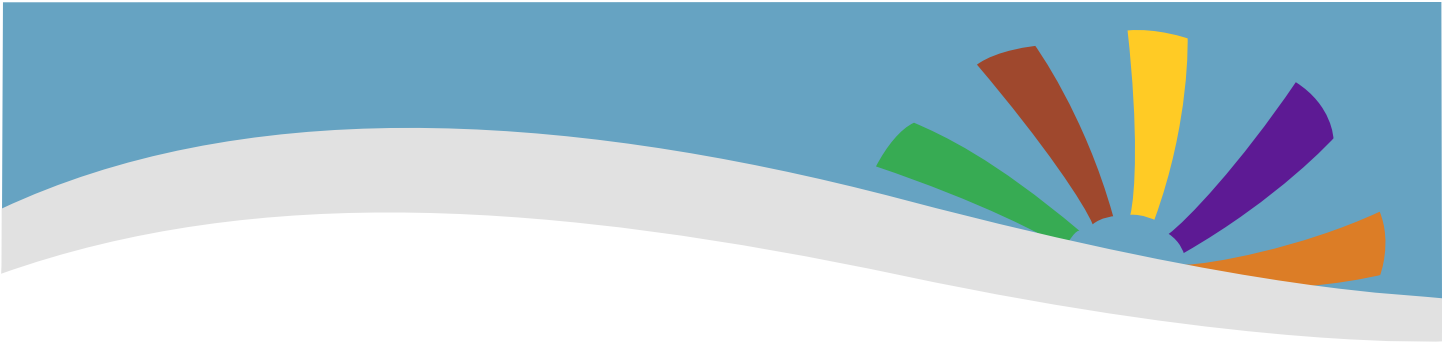
Week 2: Emotional Safety

Week 3: Physical Safety

Week 4: Know Your Role

For recommended resources and program ideas to highlight, visit the [OSSC Website](#).





Week 1: Comprehensive Safety

Each student learns in an environment that is physically and emotionally safe for students and adults. A safe school addresses the emotional and physical safety of students and staff by using a comprehensive approach that engages school staff, students, families, and the community.

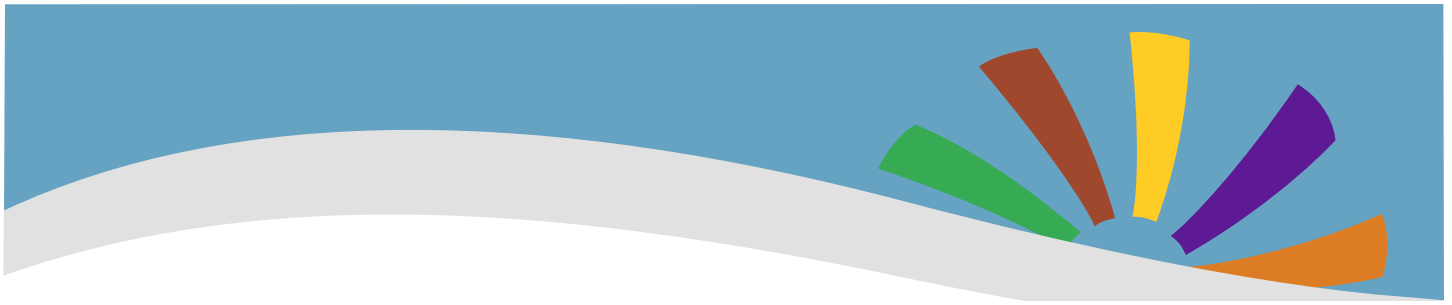
Safe and successful learning environments are fostered through collaboration among school staff and community partners, while also integrating existing initiatives in the school that address the mental and behavioral health of staff, students and families.

This week, highlight some of the ways your school is improving safety through prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

Some suggestions of highlights to consider are:

- **Anonymous Reporting System (ARS) or Tip Lines** — All K-12 public schools are required to adopt an ARS. Schools can utilize the [Safer Ohio School Tip Line](#) for free. Posters, cards, videos, and other promotional items are available on the OSSC website. Join the [October Tip Line Talk](#) to get your questions answered about implementing anonymous reporting in your district.
- **Behavioral Threat Assessment** — Explain to students, staff and parents how you will be utilizing this method to provide intervention supports. Public K-12 schools are required to have these teams in place by March 24, 2023. Find out more [here](#).



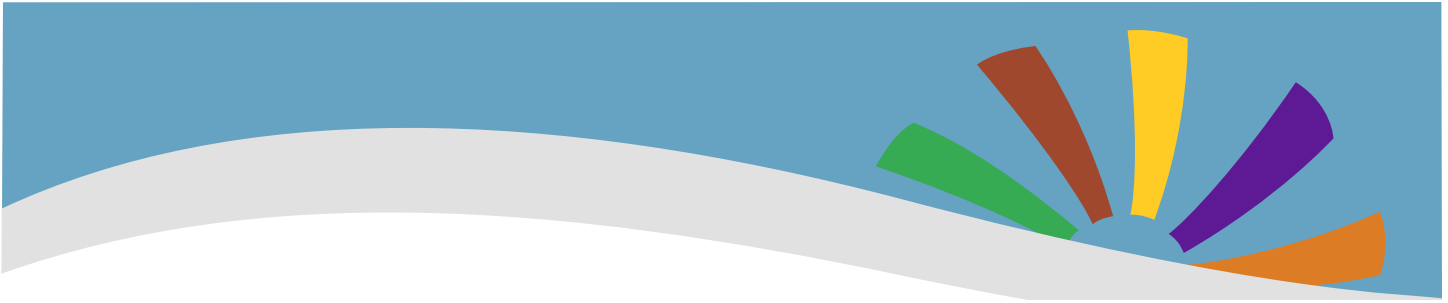


Week 2: Emotional Safety

The school establishes emotional safety by creating a climate that is inclusive, supportive and builds positive relationships among students and staff. The school implements strategies to prevent emotional harm and build resiliency including teaching students social and emotional skills, supporting students' behavioral health needs, addressing bullying, and reducing risky behaviors such as drug and alcohol use. The school uses threat assessments to determine severity of threats and to resolve conflicts or problems early.

This week, highlight some ways your school is ensuring students feel emotionally safe. Some suggestions of highlights to consider are:

- **Bullying Prevention** — October is [National Bullying Prevention Month](#). October 12 is National Stop Bullying Day. Resources are available [here](#) and [here](#), and you can highlight your school's specific school climate and anti-bullying initiatives. There are tons of activities available to download for various grade levels.
 - The State Student Safety Council recommends doing a spirit day of wearing odd or fun colored socks to show that everyone is different and shouldn't be bullied for their differences or unique style.
- **Kindness Matters** — October 19 is [Unity Day](#), wear and share **orange** to show unity for kindness, acceptance and inclusion.
- **Review Policies & Procedures** — It is a great time to review your bullying policies and communicate them to students and staff. [Anti- Harassment Intimidation and Bullying policy and resources](#) provides great supports for schools. Is your school participating in the [Ohio School Wellness Initiative](#)? Get ideas of how to implement this comprehensive plan.
- **Suicide Prevention** — [Life is better with you here](#) is a great resource to start the conversation with students, reduce stigma surrounding mental health, and showing students it is ok to ask for help. You can also request posters and cards from SAMHSA for the new 988 life line. Click on printable materials, and then "[Order from the SAMHSA store](#)" under each resource.

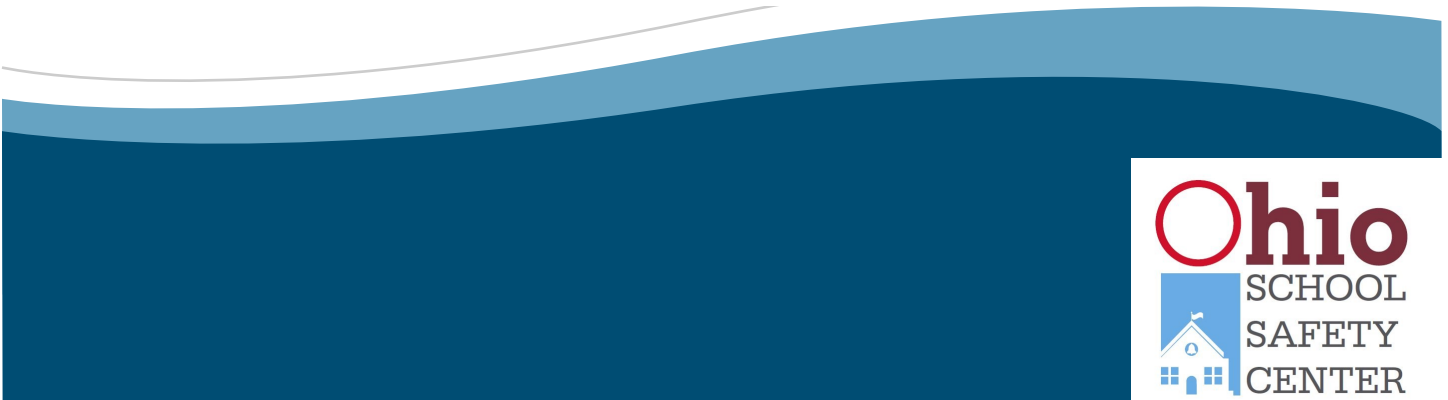


Week 3: Physical Safety

The school's physical environment plays a critical role in keeping students safe. The school ensures the physical safety of its students, staff, and visitors through strategic facility design, maintenance, effective security policies and procedures, and thorough emergency planning and preparedness efforts.

Balance physical and psychological safety to avoid overly restrictive measures that can undermine the learning environment by combining reasonable physical security measures (e.g., locked doors and monitored public spaces) with efforts to enhance school climate, build trusting relationships, and encourage students and adults to report potential threats. Some things to consider this month include:

- **National School Bus Safety Week October 17-21, 2022** — This week is an active and evolving [public education program](#) and an excellent way for parents, students, teachers, motorists, school bus operators, school administrators, and other interested parties - to join forces and address the importance of school bus safety
- **Conduct a Safety Drill** — Use this opportunity to conduct your annual [Emergency Management Test \(EMT\)](#) and share the importance of taking threats seriously with your students and staff. This is also a good opportunity to share with parents/guardians how you will communicate with them during an emergency and how best to respond for reunification.
- **Site Assessment** — Conduct a physical security and vulnerability assessment with local law enforcement or request one from the OSSC team. These assessments can be used to identify security gaps or concerns that can be immediately addressed with no cost solutions.
 - Don't forget to work with your first responders on plans for after school events such as sporting events, practices, and mass gathering events.





Week 4: Know Your Role

School safety is everyone's responsibility. Whether you are a student, educator, staff member, counselor, school resource officer, administrator, transportation staff, parent/guardian, etc., you can play a role in keeping students safe. Get your school team together to have them self identify their roles and create a plan for the rest of the school year to highlight safety programs.

Things to highlight this week include:

- **Red Ribbon Week** — This year's theme is [Celebrate Life. Live Drug Free.](#)
- **Sign Up For Know! Tips** — [Know!](#) is an educational program created by Prevention Action Alliance that empowers parents and teachers to promote health and wellness and protect the young people in their lives from unhealthy behaviors, including alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use.
- **Sign Up For Teachable Moments** — Teachers are powerful influencers in their students' lives. What you share in your classroom can positively impact a child's decision not to use alcohol, tobacco, marijuana or other drugs. Sign up for more information [here](#).
- **School Violence Prevention: Tips for Parents and Educators** — Children, staff, and parents all have an important role in promoting school safety by following procedures and reporting concerns. It is also important to balance sufficient building security with a healthy, nurturing, school environment. The goal is to reassure students that although there is a possibility of violence occurring in a school, the probability of a school experiencing a high-profile violent act is extremely low. [Find conversation tips here](#).
- **SAMHSA's Talk They Hear You** — SAMHSA's national substance use prevention [campaign](#) helps parents and caregivers start talking with their children early about the dangers of alcohol and other drugs uses. There are several PSA videos here as well.

